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EVERYMAN'S PROGRESS

THE SECOND ATTEMPT

By Charles Easton

MEN and women setting out upon the religious life expect, like Christians, to meet with difficulties upon the way. Indeed, we imagine we shall welcome them as a test of our courage and the proof of our faith. Problems of belief, periods of aridity, worldly temptation, even sins like selfishness, bad temper and sloth, we are ready to do battle with them all, in the power of the Spirit. Only we didn't win! It wasn't as simple as we'd hoped. Even the prayer on which we had counted for help, didn't seem to work. It was a hopeless struggle, battling on a dozen fronts at once, with no apparent mastery anywhere. Anyone who sees no result from his effort, gets tired in the end. He decides it is no good going on any longer. When we discover how slack we've been over the religious practices we began with such enthusiasm, we are apt to conclude that we are not cut out for the higher reaches of the religious life, and had better be content to justify ourselves in good works.

"Quit Thyself"

No one of us who has reached this stage in the religious life need suppose we have retired from the high calling to which we were called. It is better to look on our pause as a strategic withdrawal to consider the difficulties of the way in the light of actual experience. "It may not seem so to thee," wrote Meister Eckhart, "but the only source of restlessness in thee is thy personal will, whether this is realised or not. We think we ought to flee this thing or follow that—places, people, methods, purposes or acts—but ways and things are not to blame for hindering thee. It is thou thyself in things, that is standing in thy way . . . starting with thyself then, rise up and quit thyself".

To be told to abandon our most precious possession comes as a shock to any "self"-conscious man or woman. A Unitarian, brought up to believe in the peculiar value of his own opinions, is even more alienated from the religious advice of the ages. Yet to battle with the claims of the ego is the common human assignment. In a religious community that exalts nineteenth century self-sufficiency along with the arrogance of twentieth century knowledge, the task is increased a hundredfold. Since as rationalists we are always quick to face up to a situation, we must admit that the tendency of our Unitarian situation is towards an inflated ego. To question the foundations of belief is the mark of adolescence, and fortunate are those

who in a free community can freely do so. It is the mark of maturity to correct the exuberance of youth by a return to the sure foundation of the religious life. But how? How do self-centred rationalists become God-centred men and women?

Seekers of the Way

It does a great deal to correct the tendency to intellectual pride and self-sufficiency in our free religious thinking, if we make our second attempt towards the religious life by way of the firm experience of those who have gone before us in the way. Individuals and church groups anxious to deepen their religious life would find great stimulus in turning to the religious literature of the world, so long as they read, not as Unitarians looking for theological symbols to criticise, but as seekers of the way to be religious. In any anthology of devotional literature, in the Scriptures of the great religions, in the writings of masters of spiritual living, there is to be found but one way to the religious life. It is the way from self to God.

The advice of religious experience is plain. We must give up ourself. But, says the twentieth century man or woman, can I go against the current of the age. Can I live contrary to the spirit of the times? Alas, the spirit of the times has always been contrary to the spirit of eternity. The self is the self, whether it wears the robes of the first century or the suit of the twentieth. Pride, self-interest, wealth, ambition fill the modern heart as they filled the ancient. There can be no room for God while they are in possession.

Masters of Religious Life

The experience of our first attempt towards religious living convinces us that it is no good skirmishing against these powers of the self. They are too many for our small powers. The masters of the religious life know another way. Again and again, we must turn ourselves to thoughts of God, seeking the things that belong to his nature, filling our minds with the thoughts of love and self-giving. Increasingly, as we patiently come back and back again to these thoughts, the demands of our self will be crowded out. Our self-indulgence will give so continually to the service of God's children, that our preoccupation will be no longer with our self, but with the things of God. Ambition will bring our mind continually to whatever will give God glory, and we will have forgotten to be concerned with the claims of our self to public recognition. The proud will forget to wonder what people say of their

achievements in their increasing joy of what they themselves know of the being of God.

Religious men and women, therefore, need not go out with arms against the self, as against an enemy. It is enough to carry stocks of patience that will again and again lead the natural impulses of the human psyche away from the self to be transformed into the likeness of God. They will be "so wrapped in God, so obedient to His willing, that their joy will be in the escape from themselves". As the years pass happily by they will discover, with Eckhart, that increasingly, they want "only what God wants, and want it God's way".

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

By E. Bramsted

(Dr. Bramsted of the University of Sydney, Australia, is Chairman of the Sydney Unitarian Congregation.)

AT the end of the nineteenth century the atheistic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche caused a stir by describing the emergence of the early Christians as a slave revolt of the dispossessed, as a movement of meek and humble folk, who, handicapped by their low station in this world, were looking for compensation in the next. From a different motive some Christians have since proudly stressed that the Christian faith first flourished among the underprivileged. What was in fact the social background of the early Christian groups? Who were the people who became supporters of Jesus and the others who many years afterwards adhered to the Christian communities at the time the Gospels were compiled?

These are important questions for every student of religion, but questions easier to pose than to answer. For as Mr. E. A. Judge points out in his recent valuable and erudite little book *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* (The Tyndale Press, London, 1960), any demographic study of the New Testament times that aims at detailed accuracy is doomed to failure from the start by the inadequacy of statistical material. Mr. Judge, an expert on ancient history and a member of the History Department of the University of Sydney, examines the social background of the first readers of the New Testament and sees this great book as the result of a rift. While its writers were mainly Jews of Palestinian associations, its readers were the Greek-speaking members of Hellenistic communities. As he observes neatly: "We do not possess the teaching of Jesus, *just as it was*. We possess the teaching of Jesus, an itinerant Aramaic preacher, as collated and formulated in Greek for the information of religious societies in Hellenistic cities. If it is to be understood properly, it must be understood from their point of view".

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The social milieu of these readers which can be traced from the Acts and the Epistles, was quite different from that of Jesus and his early followers. Jesus of Galilee came from a rural region with only villages and small towns, an area very backward by the standards of contemporary civilization. Many of his parables indicate that Jesus thought "in terms of this circumscribed manner of life". Different from the Master himself, his followers had little sympathy with the sophisticated circles of the cities. They detested the publicans, scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem or, in sociological terms, the representatives of financial, legal and religious vested interests who, in their turn, were contemptuous of the Christians. It was the same with intellectuals (the Sadducees) and with the ruling administrative group which included the chief Jewish priests.

The initial Galilean group of Christians was publicly branded as one composed of "unlearned and ignorant men". It is true, Jesus managed to win the secret support of some

educated people in high places ("among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him", John XII, 42). However, the expansion of the initial group came through the sympathy of sophisticated Jews from abroad who at the time lived in Jerusalem for study, on business, as transitory tourists or because they had retired. The financial backing these members of the foreign community gave to the Jerusalem Christian group became evident through its impoverishment after the foreigners had left.

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Christianity in its canonical form, as expressed in the New Testament was thus "not so much the work of Galileans, as of a very cultivated section of international Jewry. They were at any rate its principal sponsors". It was also a foreign Jew, Saul of Tarsus, who after his conversion and jointly with the Cypriot Barnabas opened the avenue for the successful advance of non-Jewish Christianity. Paul himself had been one of the distinguished group of foreign Jews in Jerusalem to which town he had been sent from his homeland to obtain a classical training in the Jewish faith. At home he belonged to the privileged group of Hellenistic families which had been granted Roman citizenship as an acknowledgment of services rendered. When it suited him Paul could therefore move with ease in the best circles of Hellenistic society. At Corinth he made contact with religious and civil leaders, and at Ephesus with members of the aristocracy.

Through an analysis of Paul's relations with the Corinthians who, full of social pretensions, were bound to hurt Paul's sensitivity and to increase his wish "to clear his gospel of any suggestion of depending on human qualifications for success", the author comes to the conclusion that "far from being a socially depressed group, the Christians were dominated by a socially pretentious section of the population of the big cities". In addition they found many adherents among the household dependants of their leading members. In those days a household community with its various groups of dependants expressed its solidarity in a common religion. In addition to the owner's servants these dependants included casual labourers working for him and tenants working for the central household to which the products of their labour went.

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Among the first converts to Christianity in certain places were wealthy or prominent persons who had been baptised together with their household, a fact significant for the way the movement spread. At Philippi a pro-Jewish businesswoman who sold purple imported from Thyatira in Asia Minor set the first example with the baptism of herself and her household which was followed by that of the city's ruler. In Corinth a situation was created when the household of Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue followed him in embracing the Christian faith.

Much of the behaviour of the groups figuring in the New Testament can be understood in terms of the religious character of the household community. How often do the parables of Jesus speak of lords and masters, servants and stewards! In other passages of the Bible reference is made to Christians as Servants of God and to their leaders as His stewards. Their duty is "the administration of His goods for the benefit of His household".

Although the dependant members of the patriarchal city household lacked freedom, at least they enjoyed security and a moderate prosperity. Compared with them the peasants and persons in slavery on the land were in a much more inferior position. But as Mr. Judge remarks, these truly underprivileged classes remained largely aloof from the Christian creed. Apart from Palestine "there is nothing to suggest that (early) Christianity penetrated beyond the civilised Greek-speaking class of the great Hellenistic cities". It was only many years later that according to Flory Christians represented a full cross-section of society, with Roman citizens as its top group and with membership spread not only over the cities but also in the

countryside. But before that period we have good reasons for regarding Christianity as "a socially well-backed movement of the great Hellenic cities".

(The biblical references supplied by Dr. Bramsted for statements in the above article have been omitted.—Ed.)

A LAYMAN'S DIARY

July 1. On ITV tonight, Arthur Miller, who wrote *The Crucible* and *Death of a Salesman*, talked (with Malcolm Muggeridge) for half an hour about his writing and his ideas. Last Sunday we had half an hour of Evelyn Waugh talking to John Freeman in the BBC's *Face to Face*. It was strange to find Miller, who professes no religious faith, consumed with a feeling of responsibility and concern for the plight of humanity ("we all built the atomic bomb . . . we are all responsible for Buchenwald"), and the devout Waugh retiring to the quiet of the countryside (which he doesn't particularly enjoy) to write books which he says have no public messages, bring up his family and let the rest of the world go by ("we aren't all called to be ascetics").

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July 6. I enjoy art exhibitions, even when I am rather foused by the exhibits. On the other hand, I am a born procrastinator, and I tend to put off going to each one until, all too often, I discover that it closed last Saturday. When I first heard about the big Picasso exhibition at the Tate Gallery, I resolved that I would not be caught out; and today—opening day—I have been round it.

I remember the stunning effect on the British public of the 1946 Picasso exhibition, which started in London, and then toured some of the large provincial centres. I saw it in Glasgow, and found it a disturbing experience. (It was not unique: the *Glasgow Herald* recorded at the time that during one crowded day a little man was observed forcing his way frantically to the exit, crying, "Let me out, let me out—I'm beginnin' far like them!")

Since 1946, Picasso has ceased to be a novelty to the man in the street, but he has not lost his power to disturb and perplex. I have rarely seen such a silent crowd as I saw this morning at the Tate; they all seemed to want simply to go round and absorb, without talking to their companions.

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I did not take a catalogue, as I wanted to form a general impression of the work. Besides, the only catalogue available costs 7/6, which is a lot (they can be hired, though, for 1/-, plus 7/6 deposit). The total effect did not seem as shattering as that of the 1946 exhibition, partly because the novelty had worn off, and partly, I think, because the pictures Picasso chose to send us in 1946 were, as he now says, "les plus viridiques" (in the quaint belief that, after six years of war, phallic Britain would prefer viriditas Vera Lynn and *The Dancing Years*). One thing did strike me very forcibly was the beauty of the colour of so many of the paintings. Black and white reproductions of Picasso's paintings are more than usually misleading; time after time I found that a work which in black and white had repelled me was entirely redeemed by the charming, even pretty-pretty, colours of the real thing.

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At the end of it all, how did I feel? I was glad I had gone. But after it all, I could not repress a feeling of waste—waste of talent, waste of effort, waste of time. True, one had been shaken up, made to look at things in a different way. But to what purpose? Is pictorial art now deemed to be more so than a faithful reflection of feelings from the "consciousness" of the talented individual? I left the gallery feeling that I would gladly swap the lot for a self-portrait by Rembrandt, or a bust by Eginia.

But I shall go again, before September 18th. (The 88 bus drops you at the door; and the exhibition is open till 8 p.m., weekdays and Sundays.)

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July 7. A senior civil servant, now retired (a man of conventional outlook), once told me that Ancurin Bevan was, beyond doubt, the best Minister he had served. I imagine that in the years to come it will be as the architect of the National Health Service that Bevan will be best remembered; and I cannot think of a better memorial for a man to have.

I only heard him once. It was in 1948, at a big party rally at Belle Vue, Manchester; a friend and I went to hear him, out of curiosity. It turned out to be a historic speech—the "lower than vermin" occasion. Oddly enough, we hardly noticed these particular words when Bevan spoke them, and when we read them in the headlines next day we had to rack our brains to recall the context in which they had been used. (In the late 1940's the political hairs of Carson and F. E. Smith passed through an uncharacteristically sensitive patch.) They were no more than a half-humorous "thrown away" remark, of the kind one makes when gossiping among friends, and they were accepted as such by the audience. What did arouse much more frenzied approval from the crowd was something quite different—an unambiguous hint that the Government had decided to nationalise the steel industry. That really brought the house down, and the emotional reaction that it triggered off all round us greatly frightened me, as it sounded more like a cry of triumph greeting a victory in a blood-fest than the sober approval of an economic decision taken in the interests of the whole community.

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It was fascinating to watch Bevan addressing this audience of rank and file supporters. He knew exactly what words and inflections would arouse quiet approval, mild disapproval of the enemy, firm "hear, hears", angry growls, and, finally, tremendous applause. It was like watching a skilled conductor getting the best out of a responsive orchestra. But . . . towards the end of the performance one began to wonder whether in fact the conductor was in charge, or whether the orchestra (and not the most rational part of it, either) was dictating the tempo while the conductor beat the time it chose.

Throughout the 1950's, Bevan appeared to be gradually fading, and imposing a tempo of his own choosing. Last autumn, it seemed, he had at last succeeded; and now, too soon, he is gone.

A MODERN ITALIAN UNITARIAN

By Basil Vinay

MANY readers of *The Inquirer* will remember the Rev. Stewart Carter's reference, at the Friday morning meeting of the General Assembly last spring, to Giovanni Fiala, and to his difficulty with publishers and booksellers, owing to the interference of the Roman Church.

You will imagine, therefore, my surprise and delight to find, on returning from holiday, that a copy of his last book was awaiting me at home, sent straight from the author. It contains some 250 pages; is well printed, and one dare to hope that somewhere it will win a wide circulation in Italy, despite the vigilance of Rome. It should also most certainly be translated into English; both for Quakers and Unitarians, who should know more about this veteran champion of the Free Faith; and for English-speaking Roman Catholics, who judge their church much too favourably by its behaviour in protestant countries, and who would be profoundly disturbed, to their great good and enlightenment!

Giovanni Fiala was a one-time fellow student with the late Pope Pius XII, but only left the priesthood and the Roman Church and found his way to our free faith. He spent three years in Britain, and then, back in Italy, became influential in educational circles. But the advent of Mussolini put a stop to

that, and a spell of imprisonment was followed by much police vigilance. In those days he was writing a splendid appreciation of Fausto Socino (Socinus), whose greatness, both as Unitarian and Pacifist, I had not realised till it came my way.

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With the collapse of Fascism he resumed his public activities—among other things persistently urging the new Italian Republican Government to insert a clause into the Military Service Acts granting pacifists the right to "refuse to kill". That such a clause operates in most protestant countries exalts them perhaps too highly in his judgment. Sometimes he almost seems to imagine that once conscientious abstention is legalised the average man will refuse to kill on government command!

But to return to his last book—"The Religion of Jesus and the Roman Church" (the choice of the adjective is obviously deliberate, and we should follow suit!)-though, with Schweitzer, Pioli holds that Jesus looked for early miraculous intervention, he finds the essence of the gospel in the Sermon on the Mount, which, for him, is no mere "interim ethic", but offers the only practical way out of our modern evils, from poverty (still rife in Italy) to warfare.

Most of the book is a sustained indictment of Rome. In an early chapter he draws a dramatic contrast between the "Christian" Emperor Constantine, whom he describes as "perhaps the most grim and cruel delinquent ever mounted on the imperial throne", and the Buddhist Emperor Asoka who "as an expression of his penitence for the sufferings and deaths he had caused, and persuaded that 'the greater conquest is that made by compassion', fully embraced, taught and spread abroad that doctrine of salvation".

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Later chapters bring the story up to date, and throw a vivid and unpleasant light on the Roman Church of today. She still excommunicates priests who show liberal inclinations; she impedes the good works of whoever rejects her claims (e.g. Danilo Dolci); the only contribution of the new Pope towards the reunion of Christendom is to invite all outsiders to return to the one true fold; and the enforced celibacy of the priesthood is condemned as "a mask that covers ruin and shame, and a danger to public and private morality".

Furthermore she attributes to her own unique powers phenomena which any student of psychical research would explain along other lines (Pioli is himself deeply interested in psychical matters); whilst, above all, her political influence is always reactionary. She has a share in the responsibility for the rise to power of Mussolini, Hitler and Franco, and in the assassination of many thousands of Serbs in Croatia, during the course of the last war. We read that the Serbs were told "you are all condemned to death, but you can save yourselves on condition that you are converted to Catholicism" (i.e. from the Greek to the Roman Church) and that "priests encouraged and blessed the assassins", who advanced "with a cross in one hand and a knife in the other". Some of the Serbs yielded, some escaped, but many, including women and children, were killed. Pioli assures us that the Vatican knew, but that it was all described as "a missionary operation without any civil or ecclesiastical pressure" by the Vatican Radio! It seems incredible, but is a warning to those who judge Rome by her behaviour in Britain, or even in Italy!

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Small wonder that Pioli asks, as Mazzini had done a hundred years before, "Is Christianity spent, or has it not yet been realised?", and answers that it all depends on whether, by Christianity, you mean the Sermon on the Mount or the dogmas of Rome. He notes with approval the "Pan-Christian" movements, and deplores the absence of Rome; but we must also look further afield. Of Gandhi, as of Jesus, he says "the light lit by him is not an isolated flame, there is at least a little flame in the bottom of every heart".

Space forbids more than a very sketchy and inadequate review of this interesting and fascinating book. But this I must add:-

Many of us, who have long loved so much of Italy—her wonderful painting and architecture—her long line of inspired musical composers (until recently sadly under-rated here, because misjudged by German standards)—her friendly and genial folk—have deplored her slavish allegiance to the Roman Church, rejoiced that a century ago she found in Mazzini so valiant a champion of political freedom and enlightened faith, and then grieved that his message fell on barren soil.

Now in Pioli we have another such prophet of unfettered faith and social reform, and some of us rejoice further that he is also a prophet of the power of unarmed goodwill. Dare we hope that his influence on his beloved but unfortunate land, added to that of his great precursor, will penetrate deeply, and will arouse the heart and mind of Italian youth, till at last the day break!

SEVEN DEADLY SINS FOR UNITARIANS

By A. Phillip Hewett

(Mr. Hewett concludes his list of special deadly sins)

Coldness and Superficiality

THE third deadly sin for Unitarians is coldness. This has been attributed to us for almost as long as there have been Unitarians, and not only by outsiders. In a nineteenth-century letter back to Boston from Naples James Russell Lowell wrote:-

"I envy you with your foot of honest snow on the ground where it ought to be, and not indigested in the atmosphere, giving it a chill beyond that of condensed Unitarianism."

At about the same time Emerson spoke of the "ice house of Unitarianism".

Stephen Fritchman, to whom I owe this last reference, says:-

"... in the nineteenth century, with rare exceptions, we gave the public the impression that we were a liberal debating society ... We substituted a syllogism for the Trinity—poor bread indeed for man's daily hunger of the soul ..."

Turning to the present, he criticises "the rarefied Ph.D. religion that fails to come to grips with the total needs of man, with his personal and emotional problems, his cultural and marital problems, his social relationships with other men and women—his challenge to live in a world of united nations and peoples at peace ..."

Well, there it is—coldness, over-intellectualism, a neglect of the many-sidedness of the human personality. It has been a standing temptation to Unitarians and has been responsible for their unwillingness to give themselves over to the warmth of poetry and pagantry, for their over-literalistic preoccupation with the analysis of words and meanings. We have talked a good deal about this sin in our churches during the past few years, but the amount of doing has by no means been commensurate with the amount of talking. We simply have to find modes of expression and action in our services and elsewhere, which will do justice to the idea of the whole man, and not an intellectual abstraction.

Which brings me to deadly sin No. 4—superficiality. We are busy people, active in many different ways, most of them excellent in themselves. But we are tempted to feel that a real grasp of religion and its meaning can be gained in the spare moments between other activities—to acquiesce in the current cult of the "ten easy lessons". We want the results without the effort and this is something which is in the nature of the case unattainable. We are tempted to dignify our casual speculations with the status of profound religious convictions and use them to set aside the ideas of people who have devoted their entire lives and energies to the religious quest. These latter were not, of course, thereby constituted infallible guides, but we must differ from their conclusions, if we do, on the basis of a hard-fought search of our own.

Negativism, Intolerance, Pride

The fifth deadly sin, which I shall call negativism. At Oxford when I was there a group of humorists made their protest against the philosophical sway of the logical positivists by setting up in business as "illogical negativists". The temptation is there for Unitarians to become illogical negativists, by which I mean that their views are determined for them by others—if others think one thing, they must think the reverse. It's like the woman who told the baby-sitter to go and see what Johnny was doing and tell him not to do it. We are in reaction against other religious ideas, very often against the religious ideas which we too used to hold:—

"we called the chessboard white—we call it black."

Where this is true a man's religion is just a parasite. Take away the religion it reacts against and it would have nothing to nourish it. Wallace Robbins, a contemporary Unitarian minister, put it neatly when he said: "While there are good and sufficient reasons for disbelief, let us say, in the Virgin birth, the orthodox belief in it is hardly a reason for announcing that it is incredible".

One has to learn that liberal-mindedness is not the same as being an iconoclast. In fact, it rules out being an iconoclast. The iconoclast is simply an inverted traditionalist. He is just as firmly attached to the tradition, only his attachment is a negative one.

The illiberalism shown here brings me on to the sixth deadly sin, intolerance. If tolerance is a virtue for Unitarians, then intolerance is surely a sin, and one to which we all too often fall prey.

It is saddening to see how often we bow to this sin. I would place it very near the top if asked to place these deadly sins in the order of their commission. The fact that we succumb to it so easily should act as some buttress against the seventh and final one on my list. This is the only one that it has in common with the traditional list—pride. Pride in ourselves and our achievements. Pride in our individualism. It has something in common with the first on my list, smugness, and yet it is not the same, for smugness is a group sin and pride is an individual one. Arnold Toynbee sums up what I mean exactly when he writes of man-worship: the idolisation of a self-sufficient philosopher. He analyses this with devastating effect but it sounds familiar, does it not? Of course the idol may not be oneself without qualification—it may be some outstanding personage with whom one has identified oneself—a cult of the individual—someone whose individual opinions one has come to revere—even (dare I say it?) sometimes the minister's!

Pride notoriously goes before a fall. We are none of us self-sufficient, none of us able to make the universe revolve around ourselves as centre. We cannot stand alone in the last resort—we are dependent upon others all the way, and dependent on the cosmic powers that sustain our life in being. The dire consequences of a pride in one's self-sufficiency is the theme of the Greek tragedies.

Correspondence

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer" 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

The Old Meeting Church, Birmingham

Sir: Having just read the lucid and informative account by Dr. Rowe of the High Court proceedings concerning this church (now alas! no more), I feel that the occasion ought not to be allowed to pass without a tribute being paid to Dr. Rowe himself for the outstanding part he has played in the conduct of the case. Characteristically, he says nothing about this, but I am certain that there is no one else in our movement possessed of the distinctive qualities that the case has demanded. Of these qualities I would mention patience, knowledge, courage and tenacity of purpose. No one perhaps but Dr. Rowe would have taken the matter up to begin with, and no one would have been so persistent in pursuing it along its snail-like course to the end; and he should be warmly congratulated in seeing it through successfully to its satisfactory conclusion. The Council in the case are, of course, also to be congratulated, but I am sure they would

agree that without Dr. Rowe's assiduous and well-informed briefing they would have found it difficult to direct the proceedings.

As a one-time Trustee of the church and as having submitted one of the minor affidavits, I have watched the slow progress of the case with especial interest, and at times I have wondered whether the Court of Chancery had changed much since the days of Dickens, but "all's well that ends well". Thank you, Dr. Rowe, for what is truly a great personal triumph for you.

There must be few who remember the stately and dignified beauty of the church, and fewer still indeed who can recall its great influence in the City of Birmingham in the days of the imperious ministry of the Rev. Joseph Wood. It was an almost accidental visit to the church in those days which brought me into the Unitarian fold, and I can never be too grateful for the sense of mental and spiritual liberation which his inspired leadership vouchsafed to me. The building is now no more, but it is good to know that something has been saved from the wreck.

New Milton, Hunts.

Yours, Herbert Crabtree.

Calvin and Servetus

Sir: It will be of interest to Layman that, following the letter from a Mr. Hughes, Editor of *The Churchman*, criticising Dr. Matthews's Saturday morning article in the *Daily Telegraph*, in which he gave a very fair and tolerant review of the burning of Michael Servetus (although his date was incorrect), I wrote to the paper protesting at the attitude of Mr. Hughes who tried to excuse the burning on the ground that it reflected the times in which Calvin lived. All those who had destroyed their opponents in the name of God and religion knew why they had done so for cruelty belongs to no particular age. Of course, the *Telegraph* did not publish this letter of mine and I would have dropped the matter but for a most sarcastic letter published by the paper in which this Mr. Hughes displayed that attitude of religious bigotry still unhappily common in certain places, going so far as to say that the Apostles would have labelled Servetus Anti-Christ! How these Christian apologists can know the minds of the early disciples so well is always astonishing. Mr. Hughes did not like the tolerant attitude of the worthy Dean whose spirit he might well emulate, and bemoaned the possibility that, were Servetus alive today, he might be taken into the bosom of the church. In view of this diatribe, I wrote again to the *Telegraph* and protested against the one-sidedness of the paper in this and other matters as seldom was a case fairly presented especially a religious one. The letter was private and I did receive the courtesy of a reply from the acting correspondence editor who tried to justify his paper's "impartiality" by saying that the Dean had replied to his critic! As if that were sufficient! Also, that many unpublished letters were received from supporters of Calvin! I have read some remarkable attempts to whitewash the Inquisition, of course by Catholics, but to pretend as the Press often does, to be impartial when it deliberately withholds reasonable protest from the other side is still all too typical today. Would that there were more spirits in Christianity, I mean orthodox Christianity, like Dr. Matthews'. Where we meet its opposite, as in the above case, I think we ought to make proper protest.

Yours, W. H. Cordell.

Middleton Murry

Sir: Your contributor the Rev. A. Pencock reminds us of the debt that John Middleton Murry owed to the Peckham Unitarian Sunday School.

Your older readers may remember that some thirty years ago Murry did in part repay that debt by preaching at my invitation, the Anniversary Services at Ditchling on the first Sunday in July. Needless to say the little chapel was packed. He had life long friends in Ditchling, some of whom knew Katherine Mansfield in New Zealand. I heard from them later that he "enriched" himself in the Greek New Testament for three months before undertaking the task—the first of its kind for him, to preach for me. It may well be—I like to think it true—that his later "Life of Jesus" had its genesis there in Ditchling.

Warwick

Yours, Harry Maguire.

"Going It Alone"

Sir: Thank you for your splendid and inspiring editorial "Invisible Religion". Your words come as a great challenge both to those inside and those outside religious organisations. "In the new civilisation a new church is being born, it is the invisible church. To it belong masses of the unknown". And to these unknown thousands you had previously referred as those who say "I intend to live by my own soul".

There are men and women who by the needs of their temperaments must have the support of an organised visible church, and I am sure that such is God's gift to them. But I am also convinced that the

spearhead of religious progress and of the movement for "the redemption of mankind" is with the creative minds of these individual men and women who say "I go it alone—I can no other—I intend to live by my own soul" Jesus was of their number— "I say unto you".
Worthing.
Yours, Malcolm Rutt.

The Rev. R. W. Sorensen at Mousley

Mosley.—At 4.30 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, July 3rd, seventy members and friends of the Mosley Christian (Unitarian) Church sat down to tea as a prelude to the special service held annually to celebrate the anniversary of the induction of their minister, the Reverend Derek Smith. The theme this year was "A Service for people of all faiths" and amongst those present at the tea were representatives of the various faiths who were to take part in the evening service. The Mayor and Mayoress of Mosley (Councillor and Mrs. C. Derwent) and Mr. Hervey Rhodes, Member of Parliament were also present.

The service was conducted by the Rev. R. W. Sorensen, M.P., Chairman of the Executive Committee of the World Congress of Faiths. The representative of the Jewish faith, Mr. Ben Hytner, read from Leviticus and he was followed by the Rev. D. Smith, who read from the Christian Scriptures. Interspersed with hymns appropriate to the occasion and organ interludes played by Miss Diana Huxley, the service continued with Imam H. M. Muhiuddin, M.A., M.Litt., reading from the Koran, the Muslim's book of Holy Scripture. Mr. Louis Ross-Enfield then read from the Baha'i Scriptures to which Mr. Sorensen added examples from Hindu, Buddhist and Confucian sources. All the readings stressed the common factor underlying our surface differences.

This theme was developed by Mr. Sorensen in his address entitled "The sap and the branches". Religious expression was only one facet of human life and there was variety in the different social systems, the different races, the different cultures. Many faiths rose to a peak then faded away or became merged with others. As there was conflict between different races and cultures so was there conflict between the religions until today when, in the hydrogen bomb, we had a force which threatened life itself and which would not distinguish between faiths or nations. What was wanted was true peace and we should remember that there were many kinds of peace; the peace of the graveyard, the peace of the cabbage patch, the peace of the prison cell and the peace of the dictatorships. All the main religions were branches serving as pathways in an approach to reality. Mosley was not the centre of the world and there were people elsewhere holding sincere convictions. He had felt the spirit of God in churches and temples throughout the world and in them all were people worshipping the same reality. There was great danger in considering spurious all faiths other than one's own and the idea of one infallible truth led to religious strife. Another danger was an air of detachment and a feeling of insularity. The religions must practice what they preach and make contact with other religions. Religion was the guardian of the eternities and he gave four conditions for true fellowship. First an elementary appreciation of and respect for doctrinal differences. Secondly, avoidance of condescension. A religion's identity must be kept and not lost in a synthetic amalgamation with an inferior level. The third condition was that there must be no attempt to convert. By all means share the good things and commend those of special significance but remember that all people are chosen people. The fourth condition was that we should honestly try to discover what we had in common with other religions. We must recognize the Spiritual Reality called by many different names—Allah, Jehovah, Zeus, God. Whatever the religion it was founded on a sense of moral and ethical obligations and when faced with calamity or need it was the same calamity or need that faced us all. What power in service to God and man was available if we would only fulfill these conditions.

The congregation of 140 ended this inspiring service by singing the very appropriate hymn:—

Gather us in, thou Love that fillest all;
Gather the rival faiths within thy fold;
Throughout the nations sound the clarion call:
Beneath Love's banner all shall be enrolled.

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Observations

The Rev. G. W. Parkinson has a very witty and a dauntless courage that enabled him to inspire and manoeuvre into position his little group of 22 aging folk making the most of their last opportunity in some cases, to see this thing which comes to pass every ten years. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about it all was the sense of ordered calm pervading everything about the little town lost among its great surrounding hills, miles from the railway and now assailed on all sides by the touring coaches of the world. In the week before our own arrival it had been found possible to put on two more showings, making five per week, for the sake of those who could not be accommodated for the usual two nights' lodging, so that on one day alone there had been a matter of 5,000 arriving, 5,000 departing and 5,000 in the theatre and all were served. We came, we saw and we crept away—the immortal tragedy played out with polished precision leaving us exhausted but quite gloriously purified. Outside, American military police—one white, one black, and chatting amicably together—kept an unnecessary watch upon the milling crowds—a symbol in itself speaking of a kingdom not of this world and yet perhaps not so very far away. Our pilgrimage over, we returned to Worl in the First, and a new verb was added to our vocabulary. For a pleasant week we "wörgled", a visit to Innsbruck, a day in Salzburg, short excursions up the valleys to Walchsee and Achensee or up behind our own village (a town only since 1957 and still very much a building) to where a chair-lift would carry one up on to the really high plateau for summer views and winter sports. Between whiles we wandered up and down the little streets among the deep-carved chalets looking for knap-sacks and eating inordinate amounts of sponge cake buried in strawberry jam and heaped with standing cream. On Sunday morning we sang hymns together high up under the roof of our Guest-house and Mr. Parkinson helped us to catch a glimpse of things as seen from mountain tops. Again we came away refreshed and began to turn our faces back to the prospect of 24 hours in the train and, for our last evening together, a channel-crossing which turned out only too reminiscent of the Lord Chancellor's "Nightmare" in *Islands*.

To all concerned a very great Thankyou!

Bury and District Unitarian Sunday School Union

The Union has been very active during the year 1959-60. In July representatives of the Bury Sunday School Union attended a meeting at Bank Street, Bolton, in connection with the Bolton Forward Campaign to hear Dr. Kuehler talk about Sunday Schools in America, and after to discuss our different Sunday School methods and problems.

In October the Union was represented at a One-Day School held at Unity, Bolton, when the theme was Easter Lessons prepared by the Bolton Sunday School Union. In April, 1960, the annual Arts and Crafts Festival took place at Rochdale under the guidance of Mrs. Rogers, the Festival Secretary. In May the United Scholars Service was held at Heywood where Mr. W. Huxley, the Union President,

(Continued on page 635)

"God Valiant Stands"

GOD valiant stands in every spear of wheat,
GOD trampled blood in every pressed-out grape,
GOD cries for love in each lamb's frail bleat,
GOD humble lies beneath the deer earth's rape.
GOD showers over every lawn of grass;
GOD nests with joy, and falls with fallen bird;
GOD freely binds, endures, in stones we pass;
GOD music makes in every droplet heard.
GOD mates and roars within the singing wind,
GOD blazes forth upon each burning beam;
GOD grows for shame in every seed that stum;
GOD glows with every soul back in His scheme.
GOD crucified where'er Night suffers long;
GOD fettered in each Displaced Person's Camp;
GOD hidden, covering, in each polluted by Wrong;
GOD staved where babies' bellies bulge and wring.
GOD suffers, joys, and lives in each I am;
GOD presses us to pray, then leaves the prayer;
GOD reaches down to us, draws up to Him;
GOD is I AM, Love, Life—His Life we share.
GOD: Holy While enveloping the Holy;
GOD'S splinters us, to integrate our goal.

E.G.B.

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Birth

O'Hourke. — on 8th July, 1960, at Battle Hospital, Reading, to Miriam and Betty, a daughter, Sarah Mary.

(continued from page 634)

gave the address: the singing was led by the Heywood Junior Choir and scholars from other schools in the Union.

During the weekend May 28/29, a weekend school for young (under 25) Sunday School teachers was held at New Overdale Bolton. The theme was "A new approach to Sunday School teaching" and was based on the North Cheshire course of Sunday School lessons. The Reverend C. H. Bartlett, chairman of the North Cheshire Sub-Committee responsible for the course, was the chief speaker, and he was assisted by other members of the Committee. Young Sunday School teachers from Chesham, Bank Street Bury and Bolton, Stand and Horwich were present, and the discussions were lively and wide-ranging.

During the year the Committee were asked by the Homes Management Committee of the Northern Sunday School Federation to consider the possibility of providing equipment at Great Hucklow for a children's corner. The Committee were pleased to adopt this plan and £10 has already been raised towards the effort. This year we are making a contribution towards the expenses of a student to the Oxford Summer School.

Besides our two official representatives on the Northern Sunday School Federation Committee, members of the Bury Sunday School Union serve on the Northern Sunday School Federation Committee and the Homes Management Committee; the President of the Sunday School Association is one of our most loyal and devoted supporters: Mr. Alex Rogers; the President-Elect is another of our members: the Reverend S. H. Knight; and the Union is represented on the Sunday School Association Committee.

From this it can be seen that not only in our own individual and local affairs is the Bury Sunday School Union flourishing, but in the wider field of our movement.

Ada White

By the sudden passing of Mrs. Ada White on 27th June, the Unitarian congregation at Southampton has sustained a sad loss to its fellowship, and shares the grief of its chairman, Mr. George M. White in the deep loss of his wife. Ada White (née Griffin) was born

(continued at foot of next column)

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Change of Address

Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Gribble bid au revoir to all friends as they leave to live at:—

196 Bank Street, Whangarei, Northland, New Zealand.

THE INQUIRER

All letters and manuscripts for the Editor must reach him not later than Saturday morning for publication the next week. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

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into Unitarianism and attended Conigre Chapel, Trowbridge; her early years there, came under the spiritual guidance of the Rev. R. H. V. Moor, and later under the influence of the Rev. J. Wain, who came to Conigre Chapel from "Levin's Mead", Bristol. He joined Mr. and Mrs. White in marriage on 22nd April, 1905; when three years later they came to live in Southampton. Mr and Mrs. White promptly joined the Church of the Saviour, where they established themselves as regular members at worship and in the service of the church. Excepting for a few years spent in Croydon, Ada White remained a faithful member up to the time of her death. She was a founder member of the Unitarian Women's League branch in Southampton in 1925, and as the oldest associate member could be described as the "mother" of the branch, attending League meetings with the same regularity as church services. Her failing health over the past two years was not without its anxiety for herself and her husband, which condition she made valiant attempts to disguise by her gay banter and cheerfulness, and which, did she know it, carved a niche for herself in the affections of her fellow Unitarians. Without spite herself, she was ever sensitive to another's slightest feelings, and always ready to smooth out the ripples of misunderstanding. Her love of flowers was profound.

A large number of the congregation and friends attended the service in church on Friday, 1st July, to pay their last tribute of farewell, prior to cremation, both services being conducted by Rev. Herbert Crabtree.